

Report on my exchange period at Trinity College Dublin, Dublin

During the first semester of my third year at the University of Groningen, I studied abroad for four months at Trinity College Dublin (TCD) in which I followed the following modules:

- Collective Labour Law (10 ects)
- Intellectual Property Right (10 ects)
- European Human Rights Law (10 ects)

Dublin is an international friendly city with lovely green spaces. I fell in love with the city right away as it is very cultural, musical, has many lovely old buildings, and generates creativity. At the very beginning, I knew that I would make great memories and would have the best experience of my life.

When I saw the ancient buildings at TCD, I could not believe that I was given the opportunity to study at one of the most prestigious schools in the world. It also has an enormous campus with a world-famous library known as the Book of Kells, which is used as a museum.

Students are also free to organise various events on campus. There is also a bar located at Trinity, in which students organise small parties every Friday. TCD also provides a variety of societies one can decide to join. During the fresher's week, all of the societies will introduce themselves and will provide information on their objectives. Joining societies are very fun as they organise a bunch of activities throughout the year and you have the chance of meeting new people. I felt at home at Trinity as there are many international students living there. Therefore, I never felt like a foreigner or alone.

Traveling to Dublin went very smoothly as there was great correspondence with the Law School. There are a variety of courses provided by TCD, and as an exchange student, you have the ability to decide on whether to take modules with exams or just assignments. The modules that I followed all required essays to be written, in which you had to write papers of 3,000 to 5,000 words. At first it seemed impossible for one to write such extensive papers. However, I would recommend writing those essays as they are a great preparation for writing a thesis. Another advantage of writing papers is that at TCD, lecturers provide great leeway on the topic of the essays and the content of it.

Writing the essays at the first instance was challenging, however, I enjoyed it very much as it gave a chance to get more familiar with the topics discussed in class and to check whether you are able to comprehend the subject areas.

The academic life at TCD can be characterised as very liberal as the lecturers do not require a particular format for the essays, nor is there a particular content requirement. The only requirements are for the legal arguments to be logical, persuasive, and clear.

Lectures and seminars

Lectures at TCD follow the same structures as the one at RUG. The difference, however, is that the duration of the lectures are 50 minutes with no breaks provided. The lectures are divided in three parts over the week.

One problem that I was afraid of before the lectures commenced was that I will not be able to understand the lectures due to their Irish accents. I faced this problem during the first week of the academic year since I was not familiar with having Irish lecturers. This gradually changed as I got more acquainted with the accent. As a result, I was able to understand and follow the discussions and the issues raised.

The lectures are very interactive since TCD believes that students will gain the acquired knowledge easier if they participate more in lectures. For one of my courses, Intellectual Property Law, the lecturer created student panels to facilitate interactive learning. At the beginning of the module, the lecturer emailed all the students with an agenda, in which he provided a list of the names of the students including the dates they were partaking in the student panel. For such a panel, you were required to do the required readings and know the issue and ruling of the cases of the week.

Seminars, on the other hand, are not regular as compared to RUG. Nor do all the modules provide seminars. The seminars start around week 8 and are every two weeks. In those seminars, questions which are believed to broaden your knowledge on the module will be discussed. The seminars also aim at generating debates between students. The durations for the seminars are also 50 minutes.

The environment in Dublin

Dublin is a city filled with many cultures. One would expect that the language they would mostly hear is English, however, there are many Spanish and French people living in Dublin. Thus, in every corner there is a possibility that you will hear people speaking Spanish and French.

The city also generates much creativity, as every corner has some art work and the city encourages everyone to look outside the traditional norm. In addition, in the city centre of

Dublin, there are many entertainers showcasing their talents either through singing popular pop songs, playing instruments or athletes showing their talents. Moreover, the city is vibrant and never quiet as there are many activities one can participate in. If there is a student that enjoys nights out, there are many pubs in which they can listen to authentic Irish music or pop music and meet new people. I would also encourage any student to visit museums and galleries in Dublin which are free, or to visit any of the beautiful cathedrals.

Irish people are very friendly and always ready to assist if you need any help. Dublin is not a big city, however it is big enough for one not to get bored as there are always plenty of activities. The city centre is the heart of life during the day and the night. The costs in Dublin is, nevertheless, very high as things such as groceries and rent is more expensive than in the Netherlands. Though these costs are high there are plenty of restaurants where you can eat delicious food for cheap.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Dublin was an amazing experience in which I gained useful insight and knowledge on the Irish system and the Irish academic system. I also met amazing people, visited many places and became acquainted with the Irish culture and other cultures from different countries. I not only gained more knowledge on the Irish educational system but learned to be more free minded and to enjoy every aspect of life.

My advice for future students going to Dublin is to enjoy your visit to the full from the first day onwards since before you realise it this beautiful experience will be over. Ireland is one of the greatest countries in the world and would recommend any students to visit the country.